

XVI.—CENTURIAL STONES FROM THE VALLUM WEST OF DENTON BURN.

BY I. A. RICHMOND AND ERIC BIRLEY.

[Read on 28th October 1936.]

The following abbreviations are employed :

AA	<i>Archæologia Aeliana.</i>
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.</i>
C	CIL VII.
EE	<i>Ephemeris Epigraphica.</i>
ILS	Dessau, <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae.</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies.</i>
PSAN	This Society's <i>Proceedings.</i>

The drawings of inscriptions, figs. 2-6, are all
reduced to $\frac{1}{4}$ linear.

I. THE STONES. BY I. A. RICHMOND.

The five stones here recorded were found on the line of the Vallum, during the road-making for the new housing-estate, known as the South Denton Estate, at Denton Burn. The work was being undertaken by Mr. G. H. Bramwell, contractor, for Messrs. Hetherington and Wilson, surveyors, of Newcastle upon Tyne. Mr. Henderson Philipson, the owner of the land, has not only given the stones to this society, but has seen to it that the places where they were discovered have been marked upon a map, the basis of the accompanying plan (fig. 1). We may consider ourselves deeply indebted for so careful a record, without which these exceptionally interesting stones would have been less significant.

The stones are generally alike. They are not building-stones for a wall, but thin slabs, about 3 inches thick, upon the broad surface of which a *centuria* has inscribed its official title. Two groups of them were noted, about 600 Roman feet apart, each consisting of stones placed on the inner faces of the north and south mounds of the Vallum, at points opposite to one another. Thus, it is clear that they were set in the mounds to mark sectors of the Vallum made by different *centuriae*. Such inscribed stones from earthworks are not common. The distance-slabs of the Antonine Wall, though essentially the same, are larger slabs commemorating the work of larger units. A closer parallel is provided by the centurial stone from the sea-dyke at Goldcliff, Monmouthshire, built by soldiers of the second legion to keep at bay encroachments of the Severn.¹ This is a slab from 2 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, 21 inches high and 14 inches wide, which was washed out of the "lower part of the sea-bank." Evidently it had been inserted in the face of the mound, and it may be taken as a very exact analogy to the stones from the Vallum here described. Such stones are as well shaped to their purpose as the inscribed building-stones in a wall. They are, in fact, a new type of centurial stone, markedly different from those in use on the adjacent Wall, which all conform to the facing-stone pattern. Future students will thus have no difficulty in distinguishing the two types.

As the accompanying plan (fig. 1) shows, the stones were found in cutting the side-streets branching from West Vallum avenue, which occupies the site of the Vallum ditch. The accurately measured pair were 587 feet apart, equivalent to 605 Roman feet, or 121 Roman paces. At the east position, two stones of the same century (nos. 3 and 4 below) occur opposite one another on the north and south mounds, which shows that one *centuria* constructed both sides of the work in its own length. This is natural

¹ Nash-Williams, *Catalogue of the Roman inscribed and sculptured stones found at Caerleon*, 1935, p. 7 and pl. III no. 6=EE VII 848.

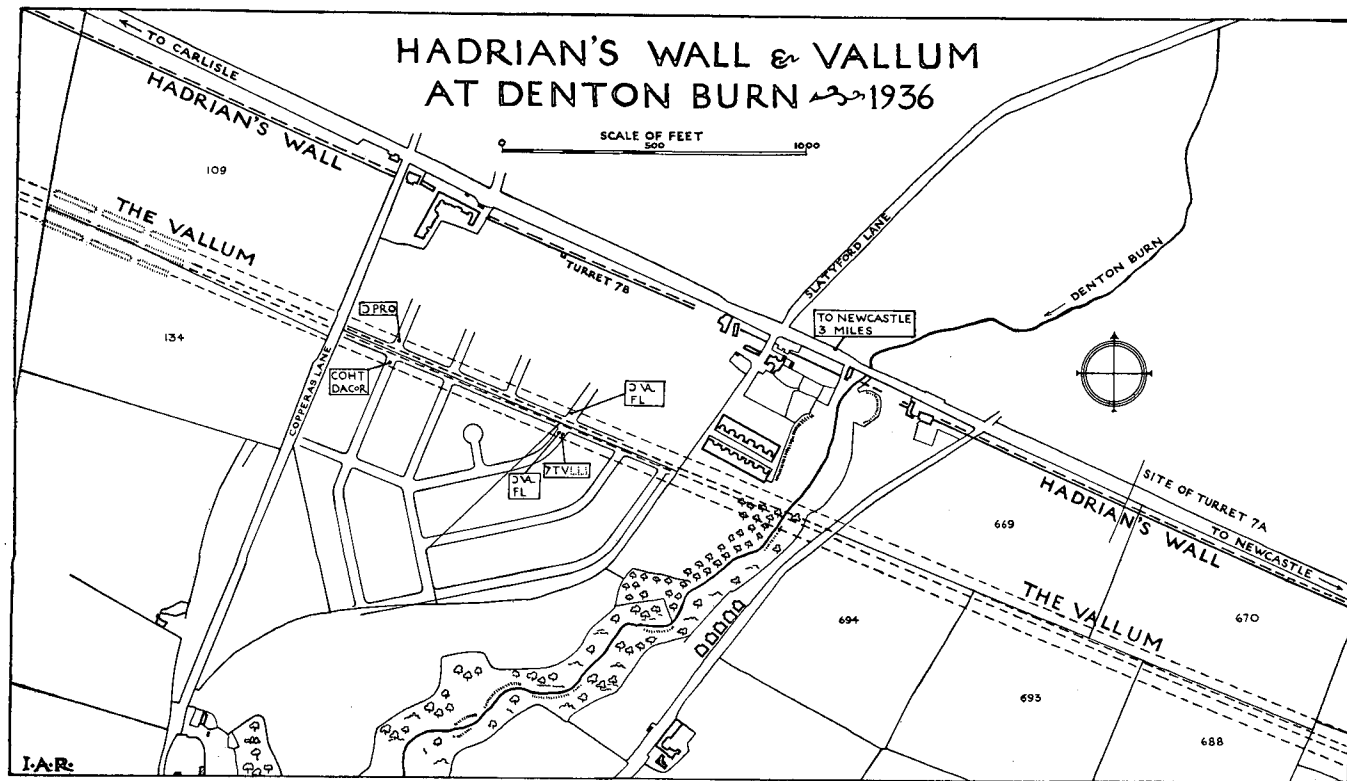


FIG. I. THE WALL AND VALLUM WEST OF DENTON BURN.

enough, since the mounds within their turf kerbs are composed of upcast from the ditch, and their creation would naturally occur simultaneously with the digging of the ditch. That another *centuria* then took up the work, is demonstrated by the discovery of two stones from different centuries (nos. 2 and 4 below) together, in the eastern group on the south mound. It is not, however, possible on the basis of our present information to arrive at the unit so constructed. It may only be observed that this must have been less than half the distance apart of the two groups of stones, since both at the east and west groups two different units are meeting. The lengths involved cannot therefore have been greater than 300 feet; they may have been much less.

If, however, the unit of work is not clear upon the evidence before us, one point may be observed. This sector happens to be that of the "long mile" upon the Wall,² where the milecastles, nos. 7 and 8, are about 2080 yards apart, instead of the normal 1640 yards, and the Vallum crossings, still visible in field 109,³ are spaced more widely, at about 58 yards instead of the common 45 yards. There is no relation between this unit and the spacing of the centurial stones, nor does any of the stones coincide with the position of a crossing. This point was worked out on the ground by Mr. F. G. Simpson and the writer.

The structural significance of the discovery may then be summarized as follows: The newly found stones show that the Vallum was being built in units no longer than 300 Roman feet, and perhaps considerably shorter. The work was done by centuries, like the work on the Wall,

² *Northumberland County History* XIII 528.

³ Ordnance Survey, 25 inch map of Northumberland, 1920 edition, sheet Nxciv, 10. It will be recalled that the careful revision of the Ordnance Survey sheets marking Hadrian's Wall, carried out by Mr. F. G. Simpson in collaboration with that department, does not begin until Whittledene is reached, about nine miles further west. The revision of the sheets east of that point, to have been carried out by Haverfield, was interrupted by the war, and was never completed.

and by auxiliaries as well as legionaries. Each unit was entirely responsible for the whole of the work in its sector, digging the ditch and disposing the upcast in the north and south mounds. Finally, it marked each end of its length with a centurial slab. Thus, for the first time, a chance discovery carefully recorded by the finders has given us a clue as to how those who made the Vallum actually went about their work.

II. THE INSCRIPTIONS. BY ERIC BIRLEY.

Four of the inscriptions are of the simple type, omitting all mention of the legion or cohort, to which most of the legionary stones belong; the fifth records work done by a century of the first cohort of Dacians, and constitutes a welcome addition to the brief list of auxiliary building-inscriptions from the line of the Wall.⁴ It will be convenient to consider the four simple texts first.

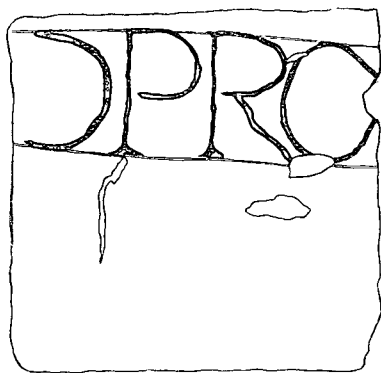


FIG. 2.

1. Fig. 2; cf. PSAN⁴ VII 11-12 and figure: (*centuria*) *Pro(culi)*—the century of Proculus. Names beginning with the letters *Pro-* are relatively few, and of those the cognomen Proculus is more common than all the rest put

⁴ See the appendix to this section, p. 238 below.

together;⁵ the abbreviation cannot reasonably be expanded in any other way. Five centurions with this cognomen occur already on the Wall:

(1) C 598a, 598b, 625: legion not stated, fifth cohort, century of Caecilius Proculus; the cognomen is rendered PROCVL, PROCV[, and PROCLI.

(2) C 566: twentieth legion, century of Hortensius Proculus (PROCVL).

(3) EE IX 1169b: century of Iulius Proculus (PROCVLI).

(4) AA⁴ x 108: century of Romuleius Proculus (ROMV PRO).⁶

(5) EE IX 1202: century of Sextius Proculus (PROC).

It will be noted that no. 4 shows the same drastic abbreviation of the name as we meet with here, but the cognomen is far too common for certain identification to be postulated. It should be added that a centurion Vibius Proculus is attested at Caerleon;⁷ as we shall see, the second is the likeliest of the three British legions to be in question here.

2. Fig. 3; cf. PSAN⁴ VII 159 and figure: (*centuria*) Tu[lli]—the century of Tullius. As colonel Spain noted

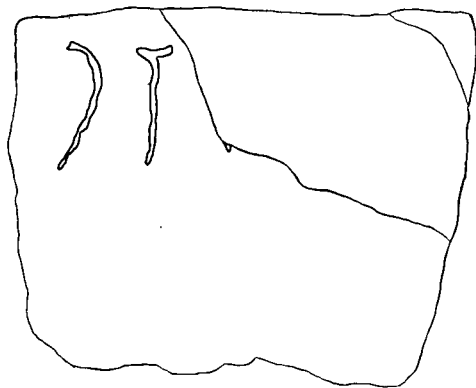


FIG. 3.

⁵ Cf. the indexes of nomina and cognomina, ILS III pp. 120, 231-2.

⁶ The reading given in JRS XXIII 213 is incorrect.

⁷ Nash-Williams, *op. cit.*, nos. 23=EE III 63b and 101.

in publishing the stone, the surface of the top right-hand quarter has broken off along the angle of the first stroke of the v; the lowest part of the letter survives. *Tullius* best fits the available space; the name is comparatively uncommon under the empire, but there is a possible instance of it already recorded from the Wall.⁸ Where a single name occurs on a centurial stone, the cognomen appears far more frequently than the nomen; but there are definite examples of a nomen alone from the Wall,⁹ and there seems to be no suitable cognomen available.

3 and 4. Figs. 4 and 5, duplicates; cf. PSAN⁴ VI 337-8 and plate XVI, VII 158 and figure: (*centuria*) *Val(eri) Fl(avi)*—the century of Valerius Flavius. As prof. Collingwood pointed out after the discovery of the first example, there are two parallels from South Wales:

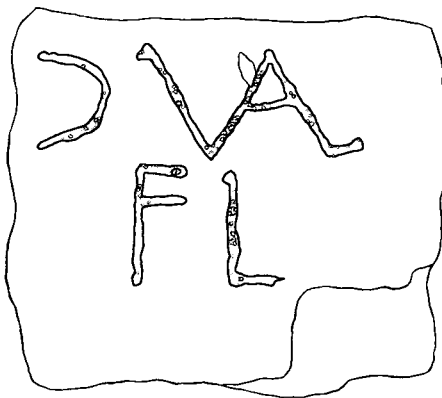


FIG. 4.

(1) Walled up in the porch of the church of Llanbadarn, near Llandrindod Wells, presumably brought there from the neighbouring fort at Castell Collen;¹⁰ EE VII 862 : 7 VAL·FLAVINI.

⁸ C 684, at Chesters; the nomen seems clear, the cognomen uncertain.

⁹ e.g., C 671: *coh. VII 7 Pompei*.

¹⁰ Cf. Haverfield, *Military Aspects of Roman Wales* = Cymmrodorion Society's *Transactions* 1908-9, 105-6; Birley, *Castell Collen* in *Archæologia Cambrensis* xci (1936) 61-9.

(2) From Caerleon—the exact find-spot is unknown :
 C 110 = Nash-Williams, *op. cit.* no. 7 and plate IV 7 : COH
 II | 7 VALERI FL | AVI.

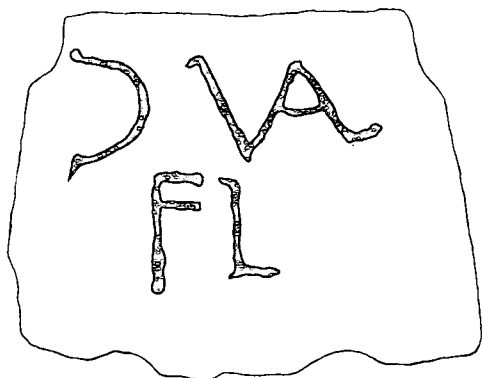


FIG. 5.

In the present case, the abbreviation *Fl.* indicates the commoner cognomen Flavus rather than Flavinus; and though that cognomen and the nomen Valerius are both common, and I have noted another example of the two in conjunction where an identification with either British instance is out of the question,¹¹ it should be noted that on the Caerleon inscription the *v* and *a* are tied, and the letters *FL* complete the first line, as though it was originally intended to use the same abbreviation as we meet with on the Denton stones; and I am prepared to assume that the latter relate to the same century as that at Caerleon. That is to say, they record the work of a century of the second legion; and if that is the case, it can hardly be a coincidence that in the parallel stretch of the Wall the second legion has left a series of records. The following inscriptions come from the stretch from Benwell fort to milecastle 8 (West Denton):

¹¹ ILS 9129, 9127, from Villalis near Astorga (Tarraconensis): Valerius Flavus, centurion of *coh. I Gallica* in A.D. 165-6 and 167.

- (1) C 530b, 530c (duplicates): 7 IVLI RVFI.¹²
- (2) C 521a: LEG II AVG COH VIII.
- (3) C 520: LEG II AVG CHO VIII FEC.
- (4) C 521b = JRS XVII 218: LEG II COH IIII.
- (5) LIIG II AVG COH I FEC.

It seems probable, therefore, that the second legion was mainly responsible for the building of the Wall and the formation of the Vallum in that stretch; that conclusion accords well with the structural evidence from the Turf Wall sector in Cumberland, where it is clear that the construction of Wall and Vallum was carried out in close liaison.¹³

5. Fig. 6; cf. PSAN⁴ VII 245-6: *coh. (prima) Dacor(um) (centuria) Ael(i) Dida(e)*—first cohort of Dacians, century of Aelius Dida. The following points may be noted:

(1) The substitution of τ for $\bar{\iota}$ is not uncommon; I have noted examples from Lower Pannonia (ILS 2591: . . . *coh. T Alp. eq. . .*) and the Crimea (ILS 9160: . . . *cho. T Bra(caraugustanorum) . .*). The bar over the letter, to indicate that the letter is being used as a numeral, has been set too low.

(2) Dida, according to Dessau (ILS 9142, footnote 1), is a Thracian name (though Lesquier, *L'Armée romaine d'Égypte* p. 81, calls it Egyptian); a centurion serving in

¹² Another instance of the same century comes from near milecastle 12: C 530a and Richardson, *Local Historian's Table Book*, Historical Division, III 106.

¹³ Since I argued in AA⁴ XI 146-157 that the Vallum was Trajanic, the excavations carried out for the Cumberland Excavation Committee by Messrs. Simpson and Richmond have demonstrated that the Vallum is in fact contemporary with the Wall. On re-reading my arguments, I find that they assume the priority of the Vallum without question (p. 146), and emphasize two main points: (1) the existing forts are part of the Wall scheme (pp. 153-4); (2) there is evidence for an occupation earlier than the time of Hadrian at a number of fort-sites (Birdoswald, Chesters, Benwell: pp. 155-6). The first of these points has been abundantly confirmed by the recent excavations at Halton-chesters, recorded elsewhere in this volume; the latter is not affected by prof. Collingwood's dictum in the *Oxford History of England* I (1936) p. 126, footnote.

a Dacian cohort in the time of Hadrian is likely on general grounds to be a Dacian—the regiment cannot have been in existence long enough for recruits from other districts to reach the centurionate; and such a centurion, if granted the citizenship, may be expected to assume the nomen Aelius, following the normal practice that the recipient of Roman citizenship took the same praenomen and nomen as his benefactor—in this case, the emperor Hadrian. The



E.B.

FIG. 6.

conjunction of a Danubian cognomen with the nomen Aelius, therefore, is appropriate for the Hadrianic date that the find-spot indicates.

(3) There is only one other record of the first cohort of Dacians in Britain, on which it does not include the title Aelia between the number and the ethnic title; that is an inscription seen and imperfectly recorded by Hutchinson in the eighteenth century, at Bewcastle "over the channel

of the gate of the public house yard'';¹⁴ the new discovery adds useful confirmation, that the title was not contemporary with the formation of the regiment. It is well known that in the early principate the names Augusta and Claudia were granted to *alae* or cohorts (in the former case, not necessarily by Augustus—for example a number of Thracian regiments possess it, which cannot have been raised before A.D. 26¹⁵) as a title of distinction, while from the time of Vespasian a title derived from the reigning emperor usually signifies that the regiment had been raised by that emperor. All the same, there is sufficient evidence to show that such titles continued to be given, on occasion, as a mark of distinction,¹⁶ and we must suppose that coh. I Dacorum was not granted the title on its foundation by Hadrian (it is more likely to have been raised by Trajan immediately after the conquest of Dacia), but in reward for distinguished service at some time between the construction of the Vallum and the year 146, when it first appears as I Aelia Dacorum.¹⁷ The grant might equally well have been made by Antoninus Pius, who took the name Aelius on his adoption by Hadrian.¹⁸

¹⁴ C 975=Hutchinson's *Cumberland* I 93; from Maughan's *Bewcastle* (1857) p. 5, it appears that, in the eighteenth century, the present Demesne farm was the public house.

¹⁵ Tacitus, *Annals* IV 46; till that date, the Thracians *si mitterent auxilia, suos ductores praeficere nec nisi adversum accolas belligerare*.

¹⁶ The following instances may be noted:

(1) CIL xvi 48, British diploma for 103: *coh. I Cugernorum*; 69 and 70, British diplomas for 122 and 124; *coh. I Ulpia Traiana Cugernorum c. R.*—the cohort has distinguished itself, presumably in the war which was in being in Britain at the accession of Hadrian.

(2) CIL xvi 39 and 46, Upper Moesian diplomas for 93 and 100: *coh. I Flavia Hispanorum milliaria*; 57, Dacian diploma for 110: *coh. I Flavia Ulpia Hispanorum milliaria c. R.*—distinction in one or other of the Dacian wars must be the reason for the grant.

¹⁷ CIL xvi 93, the Chesters diploma.

¹⁸ I hope to deal elsewhere with the question whether any regiments bearing the title Aelia can be shown to have been raised by Hadrian; here it will be sufficient to note that in some cases a similar grant of title seems more likely.

APPENDIX : BUILDING-RECORDS OF AUXILIARY REGIMENTS
FROM THE LINE OF THE WALL. BY ERIC BIRLEY.

The evidence for the part played by auxiliary regiments in the building of Hadrian's frontier works is regrettably scanty; there is not a single dedication comparable to those of *coh. VI Nerviorum* at Rough Castle,¹⁹ *coh. I Tungrorum* at Castlecary,²⁰ and *coh. I Baetasiorum* at Bar Hill²¹ on the Wall of Pius, which tell us the names of the original garrison and builders in each case. Indeed, there is only one inscription, specifically dated to the time of Hadrian, which records the name of a cohort in a fort on Hadrian's frontier—a dedication for the health of L. Aelius Caesar by the prefect of *coh. I Hamiorum* at Carvoran.²² But there are a few inscriptions which mention auxiliary regiments, or can be shown to record the work of auxiliaries, whose form and lettering indicate that they are records of building, either of forts or of sections of Wall, at this time; and it will be convenient to collect them here.

(1) *Coh. I Thracum equitata*. C 501 (Newcastle, found in the Whitefriars): COH I THRACVM. The cohort seems to have come to Britain from Lower Germany (cf. E. Stein, *Die kaiserlichen Beamten und Truppenkörper*, 212-3); the earliest dated record of its presence in Britain is the diploma for 122 (CIL XVI 69), but its number must be restored on the tombstone, found at Wroxeter, of an *eques* Tib. Claudius Tirintius,²³ who died at the age of 56; his names show that he received the citizenship from either Claudius or Nero, and the inscription cannot well be dated later than the time of Vespasian, if so late. The regiment

¹⁹ EE IX 1241.

²⁰ C 1099.

²¹ EE IX 1245 with 1244.

²² C 748, dated to A.D. 136-8 by the mention of the prince, adopted in the former and dying in the latter year.

²³ C 158 with EE VII 864 and IX p. 534; my own examination of the stone makes it certain that the number *I* must be restored.

can hardly have crossed to Britain with the army of invasion in 43—it is unlikely that there were any Thracian regiments in the western provinces before 45 or 46,²⁴ but it may have been one of the eight auxiliary cohorts sent over to Britain by Nero in 61 as reinforcements, after the defeat of Boudicca's rising.²⁵ From the time of Severus, it was stationed at Bowes in north Yorkshire, where it has left four inscriptions;²⁶ before that time, the Wroxeter tombstone and the Newcastle building-record are the only pieces of evidence for its stations in Britain, to which province, finally, it is assigned by a *cursus honorum* from Ostia, which seems to belong to the second century.²⁷ It may well have been in garrison at *Pons Aelius*.

(2) *Coh. I Batavorum equitata*. C 777: COH I BATAVORVM F, and EE VII 1065: COH [I] BA[TA]VORVM, both from Carvoran. This was no doubt one of the four Batavian cohorts which took part in the battle of Mons Graupius in 84;²⁸ it appears in the British diplomas for 122, 124 and 135 (CIL xvi 69, 70, 82), and in the Notitia is placed at Procolitia = Carrawburgh, where it has left half a dozen inscriptions, one of them dated 237.²⁹ Otherwise, its only testimonies are a couple of lead seals from Brough under Stainmore,³⁰ and an inscription from Castle-

²⁴ Cf. Pauly-Wissowa's *Realencyclopädie* vi A 452.

²⁵ Tacitus, *Annals* xiv 38. Cheesman, *Auxilia* p. 19 footnote 4, takes these to have been the eight cohorts of Batavians which later played a notorious part in the events of 69-70; but it seems clear that they had shared in the exploits of the fourteenth legion, and so had been in Britain before 61 (cf. Tacitus, *Histories* i 59, ii 28, iv 12).

²⁶ C 273, 274; EE VII 941 with ix p. 564; JRS xviii 212.

²⁷ CIL xiv 3625.

²⁸ Tacitus, *Agricola* 36—the best manuscripts read *quattuor*.

²⁹ C 621 is dated to 237; undated, but attributable to the third century, are C 617; EE III 105-8 (not all mentioning the cohort now), 185 = ILS 4725.

³⁰ Cf. I. A. Richmond in Cumberland and Westmorland *Transactions* xxxvi 120-1: C I B seems best expanded *B(ataavorum)* rather than *B(aetasiurum)* or *B(racaraugustanorum)*. These seals seem to belong to the early part of the third century; in any case, they have no bearing on the precise place of garrison of the cohort, but the reference to a decurion on one of them shows the regiment to have been *equitata* (cf. also EE III 108), like the other Batavian cohorts.

steads which is incomplete, probably attributable to the third century, and in any case no guarantee that the cohort was ever stationed there.³¹ It follows that the two stones from Carvoran are the only evidence for the regiment's position in the second century, and as we know *coh. I Hamiorum* to have been stationed at that fort by the end of Hadrian's reign, *coh. I Batavorum* cannot have remained in garrison there for very long, if indeed these inscriptions indicate building by the appointed garrison, and not merely the chance work of an auxiliary building detachment.

(3) *Cohort not stated*. C 631a (Carrawburgh): (*centuria*) *Thruponiana p(edes) XXIII*. Found, apparently *in situ*, in the interval tower between the west gate and south-west angle of the fort.³² The name *Thrupo* is undoubtedly German,³³ of a type that I have not noted among legionary centurions at so early a date; it seems best to suppose that here, as on the Antonine Wall, the building of the fort was left to auxiliaries. It is not certain what that regiment may have been, but it is likely that it was *coh. I Aquitanorum*, an inscription of which from Carrawburgh seems suitable in style for this date;³⁴ the cohort, which appears in the British diplomas for 122 and 124, was at Brough in Derbyshire in the governorship of Iulius Verus,³⁵ and still in existence in the third century,³⁶

³¹ C 886, revised reading by Haverfield in EE ix p. 604: *c]oh. I Ba[t.*

³² Bruce, *The Wall of Hadrian*, Newcastle, 1874, p. 24; the tower is still partly exposed. Prof. Collingwood assumes (Bruce, *Handbook*, ninth edition, 1933, p. 102) that it is a Wall stone re-used in a repair to the fort; but the name, indicating a German auxiliary, and auxiliary analogies from forts elsewhere (e.g. C 213: *coho. I Frisiav. 7 Masavonis p. XXIII*), support Bruce's view that the inscription relates to the original building of the fort.

³³ Cf. C 332 and M. Bang, *Die Germanen im römischen Dienst*, 1906, p. 102; the name also occurs on a dedication from Lincoln, EE iii 179.

³⁴ C 620a.

³⁵ EE ix 1108; C 176, from near Bakewell, is an altar set up by a prefect of the cohort, presumably while Brough was its station.

³⁶ ILS 7173: it seems best to read *Aquet(anorum)* rather than *Aq(uitanorum) vet(eranorum)*, since the latter reading involves confusion with a separate cohort in Upper Germany (cf. JRS xxii 56-7).

though we cannot say where it was then stationed.

(4) *Ala not stated*. EE VII 1023 (Chesters): *t(urma) LAF p(er) val(lum) p(edes) CXIII: turm(a) LAFAN*. The name of the decurion after whom the troop has taken its name is not certain; Mommsen suggested L(ucius) A——F——, and it may be regarded as probable that he was a Roman citizen. Coming from a fort where we know cavalry to have been stationed, this stone (which in any case cannot have come from the Wall, since the inscription is set on two sides of it) no doubt indicates work done by the ala assigned to the building and occupation of the fort under Hadrian; but we cannot say what ala that was. *Ala II Asturum* has left third-century records of its presence at Chesters,³⁷ where it is placed in the Notitia, and another inscription couples it with the name of a legate Ulpius Marcellus, who is usually taken to have governed Britain shortly before and after 180;³⁸ but at some time, apparently in the second century, it was at Ribchester near Preston in Lancashire,³⁹ and it is necessary to look for a different garrison for Chesters at that time. Presumably the ala at Chesters in 146 was one of the three mentioned in the diploma of that year (CIL XVI 93), which was found in one of the guard-chambers of the south gate of the fort: the three are *Augusta Gallorum Proculeiana*, *I Hispanorum Asturum*, and one whose name has perished, but seems restorable (on consideration of the available space) as *I[Pannon(iorum) Sabin(iana)]*;⁴⁰ and it seems likely that it was the first of these. A lead seal found at Chesters has on the obverse *al(a) Aug(usta) q(uingenaria)*,⁴¹ and I have shown elsewhere that the ala Augusta traceable at Old Carlisle from the time of Com-

³⁷ C 585 (A.D. 221), EE III 100, VII 587 with IX p. 581.

³⁸ The point cannot be discussed here, but it seems probable that, here and at Benwell (C 504), it is a later Ulpius Marcellus, perhaps a son, governing Britain in the time of Severus or Caracalla and Geta, rather than the man with whom he is usually identified.

³⁹ C 221 with EE IX p. 559.

⁴⁰ So Nesselhauf in CIL XVI p. 85.

⁴¹ EE VII 1152.3 and AA² XIII 362, where it is illustrated.

modus onwards is to be equated with the *ala Aug. Gall. Proculeiana*,⁴² which may be supposed to have been transferred there from Chesters.

To sum up: at or close to four forts, Newcastle, Chesters, Carrawburgh and Carvoran, we have an indication of auxiliary regiments being employed in the building, presumably of the forts themselves, as on the Antonine Wall. The first cohort of Dacians, on the other hand, was clearly working on the Vallum, so that there is no need, for example, to assume that it was once stationed at Benwell; it cannot be traced at Birdoswald (where it is placed by the Notitia) before the time of Severus⁴³—before that, it may well have been stationed at Bewcastle beyond the time, before 146, to which we must assign the altar recorded by Hutchinson.

⁴² Cumb. and Westm. *Trans.* xxxi 146.

⁴³ JRS xix 214 (c. A.D. 205) is its earliest record there: the emperor in C 837 is Caracalla or Elagabalus.